Information Systems Department
Fiscal Year 2002

Over the past few years the digital revolution has spilled well beyond the bounds of the personal computer. These days, it's probably easier to identify what doesn't fall within the realm of "information technology" than to describe what does. As a result, the Information Systems (IS) Department spent much of its time this year designing and implementing a new scalable, yet practical, infrastructure capable of supporting these emerging technologies.

At the beginning of FY 02, the IS Department was responsible for 160 users and 150 PCs; since then we've added over 100 users and over 35 PCs. In FY 03, the IS Department projects that another 75 users and 20 PCs will be added to the network. Additionally, the digital revolution has enabled technologies such as copiers, cameras, cellular phones, PDAs, security systems, HV/AC systems, parking meter boxes, and even phone systems to be accessed by the network. With the current economical climate, IS departments across the state are being challenged to come up with innovative ways to expand their information technology infrastructure to meet the needs of departments while maintaining little or no staff growth within their department. Following a multi-pronged approach engineered early this fiscal year by the IS Department, I'm proud to say we have met this challenge.

As part of the multi-pronged approach mentioned above, the IS Department was partway through engineering a major migration to Windows-based servers when we lost our primary Novell server. After diligently attempting to recover this server, the IS Department made the decision to complete the migration over the course of a three-day weekend. With minimum downtime, and thanks to the dedication of every member in the IS Department, and their ability to work well as a team, the migration was a success.

One of the software packages that have made use of the newly constructed network infrastructure this year is the new Public Safety Software Package (PSSP). This long-overdue package, purchased from Information Management Corporation of Grafton, Massachusetts has revolutionized how Public Safety information is stored and accessed. On the Police side, officers can now access and input information, such as accident and incident reports, directly from laptops in the cruisers. In the Communications Center, dispatchers are now using multiple flat panel monitors to view and manipulate various components of the software simultaneously. Within the next few months, the last component of the package will go live for the Fire Department, allowing the Department to migrate from a paper-filled environment to a digital one.

In addition to the technological benefits of the new PSSP, the Town will also benefit financially. The package was leased over a three-year period, using only the budget allocated to maintain the old package. In FY 06, the IS Department's software maintenance budget will actually decrease by over $30,000.

Each year the need for message and collaboration grows. It's hard to believe that less than three years ago the Town did not have organization-wide e-mail; today many Town staff rely on e-mail as their primary form of communication. This year the IS Department added a Microsoft Exchange Server to the network and introduced Microsoft Outlook to all desktops.

This combination allows users in every department and building to schedule meetings and share calendars, task lists and contacts from one central location. Additionally, Outlook works with mobile devices such as PDAs and cell phones, increasing the ability to communicate from many locations.

In addition to the many projects completed this year, the IS Department worked diligently to maintain standards that include the most current anti-virus protection, nightly backups, intrusion monitoring, software updates and service packs, hardware upgrades and replacements, event log monitoring, and much more.

The purpose of any IS department is to increase productivity and functionality through the managed use of technology. We feel our efforts this year have contributed to that ultimate goal. In the coming year we will realize the objective of an even more connected town when we begin use of the recently completed fiber-optic I-Net. With that accomplishment, the Town will enter into a new era of digital communication, which will serve its residents effectively for years to come.

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